

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

22nd CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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HINCHEY'S \$320,000 EARMARK WILL IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION FOR MIDDLETOWN SENIORS

MIDDLETOWN - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-22) today held a press conference with Mayor Joseph DeStefano and Middletown senior citizens to discuss federal funding he secured to improve transportation for seniors in the city. Hinchey earmarked \$320,000 in federal funding that will allow Middletown to purchase two new shuttle buses and improve bus shelter facilities.

"Transportation is a vital issue for senior citizens," said Hinchey. "The improvements that this money will fund will give Middletown's seniors a added measure of independence. I'm very pleased that I was able to help with this important project."

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, Hinchey helps write the thirteen discretionary spending bills that Congress must pass each year. In this capacity he has direct influence on the funding of federal programs that are important to his constituents. He also has a greater opportunity to request specific earmarks for projects in the district. The funds he requested for the Middletown bus project were included in the omnibus appropriations bill that was signed into law earlier this year.

Currently Middletown's shuttle bus service for senior citizens handles 13,000 rides a year with one 16-passenger vehicle. The shuttle takes seniors to medical appointments, the Senior Nutrition Meal Program, grocery shopping and other destinations around the city. With seniors remaining in their own homes and staying independent longer, the service can no longer handle the volume.

This grant will allow Middletown to purchase two handicapped-accessible shuttle buses to meet the increased demand. The funds will also be used to provide public bus stop shelters with benches and handicapped-accessibility. The shelters to be improved are at the Mulberry House Senior Center, senior housing complexes, and grocery shopping areas.